

# VU Research Portal

## What is Christian Philosophy?

Glas, G.

### ***published in***

Pro Rege

2011

### ***document version***

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication in VU Research Portal](#)

### ***citation for published version (APA)***

Glas, G. (2011). What is Christian Philosophy? In M. Dengler, Editor (Ed.), *Pro Rege* (pp. 1-17). (1). Dordt Press.

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal ?

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

### **E-mail address:**

[vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl](mailto:vuresearchportal.ub@vu.nl)

# What is Christian Philosophy?

“We must know where to doubt, where to affirm and where to submit. . . .”<sup>1</sup> I would like to use these words of Blaise Pascal to set the tone for my discussion of the question: What is Christian philosophy?

Doubt! Affirm! Submit! According to Pascal, we can break each of these rules. We shortchange doubt when we claim that everything can be proven. If we acquiesce in everything, we fail to do justice to argument and the ability to make judgments. So too, assuming that everything should be doubted leaves no room for assent.

I have chosen these words of Pascal—a believer, skeptic, and mathematician—because they evidence the spirit with which the Christian philosophy I have in mind is done. Pascal is not about trying to find the golden mean between doubt, proof, and assent. Rather, his thoughts assume and tangibly demonstrate the tension between these three. Doing philosophy is all about the thoughtful exploration of that tension—a tension that does not absolve the investigator. The relationship between the thinker and the truth is what is at stake. That relationship has to be there. Philosophizing requires thinking through the position from which one is philosophically busy.

Be that as it may, is not the more immediate question: But is Christian philosophy what we need today? Aren’t we talking about some kind of relic? An oxymoron, a contradiction in terms—a “wooden iron,” to use Martin Heidegger’s example?<sup>2</sup> Is it not better to keep faith and reason separate? Does “christian philosophy” deserve a place in the university? Is it not simply faith lurking behind an intellectual façade?

I will address these kinds of questions later. But I want first to articulate where I stand—my (thetical) position, if you will. Doing so fits with the style of philosophizing I am addressing. This way of doing philosophy is interested in the relationship between questions and the questioner. What is the gist—the direction-setting spirit—of the question? What does the person asking the question presume, and what am I being asked to take for granted when engaging that question?

The answer is not difficult to come by. We recognize the gist of the questions mentioned. The spirit behind these queries is scientism: the conviction that knowledge and insight are legitimate only when matters are substantiated scientifically and can be traced back to empirical data and logical argument. Not that Christian philosophy has a problem with hard evidence and cogent argumentation. Rather, the *pretense* of these questions is the point; the way in which they are posed, the claims they imply. The implicit contention is that science is the only credible yardstick, the last court of appeals when it comes to human knowledge, and the key to insight and truth. The claim itself, however, is far from scientific, nor can it be confirmed with scientific means. The term Alvin Plantinga would use is “self-referentially inconsistent.”<sup>3</sup> Herman Dooyeweerd would describe it as “uncritical”—because those who defend this claim have not critically evaluated their own starting point. Had they done this, they would have seen that what they assert presupposes that the theoretical attitude of thought is absolute; that is to say, is impervious and accountable only to itself. But that presupposition deserves critical review.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The aphorism in its entirety reads: “201. We must <have three qualities, Pyrrhonist, mathematician, Christian. Submission. Doubt. They all interlink.> know where to doubt, where to affirm and where to submit when necessary. Whoever does not do this does not understand the force of reason. There are some who fall short of these three principles, either by affirming that everything can be demonstrated, lacking all knowledge of the demonstration, or doubting everything, lacking the knowledge of where to submit, or by submitting to everything, lacking the knowledge of where to discriminate.” Pascal (1995).

<sup>2</sup> Heidegger (1935/1983), p.6.

<sup>3</sup> Plantinga (1983), pp.60 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Dooyeweerd (1953-1958), Vol. I, pp. 34-38.

Returning to the question posed earlier: is Christian philosophy what is called for today? And should faith and reason not be kept separate? These questions may well have been broached by a particular scientific spirit, but does that render them illegitimate? The answer, of course, is no. We just need to pry them loose from the mindset in which they are grounded. Once we have done that, the Christian philosopher, just like every other philosopher, is confronted by the question regarding the relationship between these pretheoretical intuitions and convictions and the insights to which theoretical reflection brings one. Heartfelt convictions and life-shaping commitments are pretheoretical in nature. Their content is rooted in a defining attitude: awe, honor, surrender, thankfulness, wonder, a sense of insignificance and deficiency. . . .

Theoretic insight is gained through abstraction and experimentation. Scientists step back from the nexus of concrete everyday life, searching for underlying patterns and regularities. They construct or control experimental spaces and then trace the effects of interventions that change one or more variables. A philosopher is also a scientist, albeit of a certain sort: one looking for fundamental connections and foundational structures that usually have to do with things as a whole. It is about knowledge, but usually knowledge about knowledge. The question here is: Is the basic positioning of the believer at odds with the basic positioning of the philosopher? Is there some connection between these two? And are there ways in which the insights of the believer can be connected with the insights of the philosopher whose work deserves the predicate “Christian” (or, as the case may be, Jewish, Muslim)?

Before proceeding, I will take a step back in order to preview the three steps that are coming:

- First, I will sketch the landscape. What is Christian philosophy? Which forms are out there? To what kinds of questions does Christian philosophy look for answers?
- Then I will review how the Christian “reformational” philosophy taught at the Free University (Amsterdam) and elsewhere came to be back in the 1930s. What’s happening with that form of philosophy today? Is it still a going concern? And how does it relate to the contemporary context?
- Finally, I will engage a theme that, given my own disciplinary background, is particularly close to my heart: psychiatry and psychotherapy.

I will describe how that theme—how one relates to oneself and the fact that during the course of one’s coming and going one *does* relate to oneself—has helped shape my conception of Christian philosophy. Discussing that theme will bring us back to Pascal, to the thinker who believed and doubted and, despite his great intellect, also knew to surrender.

## The landscape

On paper, Christian philosophy can be conceived of in three ways: as a philosophy devoted to a specific topic or object; as a philosophy that avails itself of a particular approach or method; and as a philosophy that proceeds from a particular sense of inspiration or life commitment.<sup>5</sup> These distinctions are theoretical; most approaches are an amalgamation of these.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> The point here is not positions in the debate regarding faith and science; were that the case, a different rubric would be called for; for example, that of Ian Barbour (1997) or that of Jaap Klapwijk (2008a).

<sup>6</sup> I will limit myself in this compilation to those forms of Christian philosophy that explicitly attempt to connect philosophy and the Christian faith. Among others, I consulted Karl Jaspers (1948), Paul Ricoeur (1998), Theo De Boer (1989; 1996), en Charles Taylor (1989; 2007) as representatives of an existential-phenomenological and a hermeneutical approach respectively; De Vries (1999) and Evink (2002) as illustrative of a postmodern approach; Stephen Evans (2006) as spokesperson for Kierkegaardian thinking; and Alvin Plantinga (2000) as a representative of *reformed epistemology*.

Natural theology and philosophy of religion would be examples of the first form: a *philosophy devoted to a specific topic or object*. Natural theology—reasoned reflection on the truths of the faith—focuses on questions like: Does God exist? And if he does, can we (say, on the basis of the teleological ordering of nature) prove that to be the case? Philosophy of religion—certainly of the Christian religion—deals with the same kinds of questions, but most often by focusing on matters epistemological: How can God or the absolute be known? What is the warrant for such knowledge? It also addresses many other religious themes, like sacrifice, myth, symbols, miracles, religious identity and culture, and religious (life-defining) conviction.<sup>7</sup>

This designation, however, says nothing about the nature of these approaches. They can have a defensive or an offensive intent; as found, for example, in negative or positive apologetics.<sup>8</sup> In both cases, the method may be either more parsingly analytic or more conceptually systematic. It is interesting to note that most recent academic work in philosophy of religion is again trying to resurrect the project of classical natural theology, but this time with modern methods borrowed from analytical philosophy.<sup>9</sup>

The second form of Christian philosophy assumes from the get-go that *philosophizing*, too, *can be done in a Christian kind of way*. There are, I believe, two variants here—a *pluralistic* and a *radical* vision. In the former, Christian philosophizing is assumed to be one perspective among other (nonchristian) forms of philosophy. The radical variant assumes that philosophy is per definition Christian philosophy—a perspective that begs further analysis. There are, as I see it, two different foundational perspectives operative within this (radical) variant: one type could be labeled as “transcendental” and the other as “existential.”

According to the transcendental approach, philosophy is per definition Christian philosophy, or at least theistic philosophy, because it is in principle not possible to do philosophy (well) apart from certain theistic presuppositions. According to this kind of transcendental philosophy, God’s existence can no more be doubted than that of the external world or of other minds. Doing so is impossible because every attempt to deny the existence of the external world or the consciousness of others or to reduce these to, say, processes of the brain necessarily appeals to categories that already presuppose the existence of such entities. The self and the person of the other are, in other words, transcendental, (necessarily) presupposed and hence irreducible. Some philosophers have applied this argument to the existence of God—God, too, is a presupposed transcendental.<sup>10</sup> Which is to say that we must proceed assuming his existence, otherwise our thinking and speaking will become thoroughly confused. Theo de Boer has, I believe correctly, pointed out that this classical transcendental approach fails when it comes to the existence of God.<sup>11</sup> Because the self and other minds belong to the world as we know it, the transcendental argument only works when we are dealing with matters empirical. And that is not the case, or at least not in the same way, for God, because God is not present-to-hand as my “self” or the mind of the other. God reveals himself by speaking through his prophets; his poets bring him closer to us in their musings. We could also say that who God is becomes manifest in the grandeur of nature and in artistic beauty. But we cannot identify his existence with anything in our world. Or more precisely, there is nothing in reality—no part of nature, no prophetic voice or poetic turn—

<sup>7</sup> See Hubbeling (1976); Geivett and Sweetman (1992); Davies (1993).

<sup>8</sup> See Plantinga (1984); Plantinga (1990); Plantinga (1992).

<sup>9</sup> See, e.g., the work of Paul Helm (1997), Richard Swinburne (1979), and the work of the so-called Utrecht school, e.g., Brümmer (1988), Vos (1981), Sarot (2006), Labooy (2007).

<sup>10</sup> For Immanuel Kant, things are a bit more complicated...

Bij Immanuel Kant, de grote criticus van de godsbewijzen, ligt dit subtieler. God is als oerwezen voorondersteld, maar dan als (transcendentiaal) idee ter regulatie van het gebruik van de verstandsbegrippen; niet als begrip met een empirische inhoud, of als werkelijkheid achter de zintuiglijk toegankelijke werkelijkheid (Kant 1787, B713vv.).

<sup>11</sup> De Boer, 1996, pp. 57-64.

whose existence we can comprehend solely on the condition that we assume that God exists. God may be presupposed, but certainly not as a transcendental, as something that must be thought in order to think.

What is there to say about the other radical, more existential, approach? Philosophy here is the exploration of different existential attitudes or positions; all the while acknowledging that philosophy itself is not free from such an existential posture or mindset. I know of no philosopher who was more conscious of this intertwinement of content and point of view than Søren Kierkegaard.<sup>12</sup> His philosophy is an extended journey along all sorts of possible attitudes to life: that of Don Juan, the judge, the evil-natured seducer, the innocent girl, the dogmatician, the systematician, the doubter, the dread-filled one, etc. Each of these attitudes to life is tested as it were for its viability and consistency. Philosophically, the system-builder is naturally the most interesting, and there is no better an example than Hegel. Kierkegaard compares Hegel to a man who built himself a magnificent house but forgot that he also had to live in it and, hence, ended up outside in the doghouse.<sup>13</sup> One has to take care of one's own quarters, also in philosophy.

Is Kierkegaard's philosophy Christian in the sense that he develops his own method and manners? Yes and no. Yes, because Kierkegaard's approach is indeed unique: testing one's own station from the inside out, all the while exposing the foolishness and radical nature of the Christian faith. No, because his style and way of working is so personal and even inimitable that one can hardly speak of a "method." What's Christian about his philosophy lies in his testing the existential consistency of various standpoints and, on that basis, incorporating specific points of view. Those points of view clarify the subjective conditions that give ground to faith.<sup>14</sup>

And then there is the third form of Christian philosophy, the one that celebrates the *Christian faith as a source of inspiration*. A broad spectrum of approaches fits this cluster. The key question has to do with how this inspiration relates to the content of philosophy. Once again, I see two primary variants. The one sees philosophy as an explication and further elaboration and articulation of a Christian world-and-life-view; the other, as providing one set of possible answers to the great perennial questions of humankind.

The first approach clearly leads to worldviewish philosophizing. One's world-and-life-view affects all of one's being, and philosophy offers the analytical and conceptual means to clarify and account for one's position. It could also be called comprehensive philosophy in the sense that "worldview" and "philosophy" are often used interchangeably here. Articulating one's worldview serves likewise to convey where one stands with respect to other (nonchristian) approaches.

A hermeneutic philosophy approaches things differently. Because people are beings that desire meaning and a sense of significance, this approach, similarly, sees cultural activity, science, and philosophy itself as responses to this search for and pursuit of meaning and import. A Christian worldview is, then, one possible answer to this quest for meaning: an optional matter of choice and appropriation. In the more nuanced renderings of this hermeneutical approach, the self and its choices are subjected to critical analysis. Those for whom religion is an option place

---

<sup>12</sup> Kierkegaard (1843; 1844; 1845; 1848).

<sup>13</sup> Kierkegaard (1848)....

Kierkegaard (1848), pp. 158-159 (these page numbers reference *Søren Kierkegaard Skrifter*, part 11, Kopenhagen: Gads Forlag, 2006); for a similar remark in *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, see Kierkegaard (1845/1992), pp. 65ff (the page reference is to *Søren Kierkegaard Skrifter*, part 7).

<sup>14</sup> Evans....

Evans (2006, pp. 15-17 en pp. 133-149) spreekt van een niet-evidentialistische apologetiek die om oefening van bepaalde receptieve kwaliteiten vraagt: openheid voor mysterieuze aspecten van de ervaring, onzelfzuchtige bereidheid om de neiging de eigen omgeving te domineren te zien als ingegeven door zondige trots en een houding van hoop op een betere toekomst en eeuwig leven (p.148). Evans ziet mogelijkheden tot verbinding tussen Kierkegaard's en Plantinga's niet-evidentialistische apologetiek; zie Evans (2006), pp. 169-182 en 183-205. Zelf heb ik ook naar zo'n verbinding met het denken van Plantinga gezocht, maar dan via Pascal's 'rede die zijn eigen redenen niet kent' (Glas 2000).

themselves in principle outside religion—religion becomes a preference that one may or may not freely choose. From my perspective, however, the pivotal point in religion—at least in Christian religion—is that one’s “self” is already taken up in religion’s perspective and must be interpreted and understood from that vantage.<sup>15</sup>

### Christian philosophy in neo-Calvinist perspective

How should reformational philosophy be characterized, given the rubric above? Also, what can be said about its development, and what are its prospects?

The character of the works of Herman Dooyeweerd and of Dirk Vollenhoven, both graduates of and later professors at the Free University in Amsterdam and the founders of what would later be called “reformational philosophy,” can be summarized with four basic thoughts.

The first basic tenet is the reality of modal diversity: everything in the world can be seen as answering to a number of irreducible/unique norms and laws. This diversity has to do with the modes of being (or functioning) that things, events, and human beings display—a diversity that simultaneously evidences deep coherence.

The second key thought is that what human beings do (or not) is rooted in one’s “heart”—the spiritual center of every person. Out of the heart, says the Bible, are the “issues of life.”<sup>16</sup>

The third point has to do with religion. Religion is neither a mental construct nor a correlate of certain kinds of psychological behavior. Rather, religion circumscribes and informs all of life and constitutes the connection with the origin of all that is. Everything that is created, all of reality, is connected with the source and origin of that reality.

The fourth of these basic convictions is that reality exists as “meaning.” Although the phrasing could be clearer, Dooyeweerd uses “meaning” to give expression to the Apostle Paul’s confession that all that exists “is from, through, and unto God.” Nothing exists in and of itself. Everything that is points toward an Origin beyond itself and likewise bears witness to the operation of that Origin. The third and fourth tenets are closely interrelated: when emphasizing the connection between God and the world, the focus is on religion; when underscoring and investigating what that connectedness implies, the meaning character of reality is in the limelight.

The first three basic thoughts were, albeit in another form, already articulated by the founder of the Free University (est. 1880), Abraham Kuyper. The spectrum of modal law diversity is a cosmological transcription of Kuyper’s sociological principle of “sphere sovereignty.” Seeing the human heart as spiritual center goes back via Kuyper to John Calvin and Augustine. Being human finds its depth and substance *coram deo* (before the face of God). The notion that religion is something that is not limited to the inner recesses of one’s life, but touches every aspect of one’s life, is also typically reformational. In that regard, think of Kuyper’s famous line from his lecture at the opening of the Free University in 1880: “. . . there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry: ‘Mine!’”<sup>17</sup> Or going back further in time, think of one of the basic insights of the Reformation, namely, that the world is not divided into sacred and a secular domains, but in its entirety gives expression to God’s creating and providential activity. Nothing is neutral, except for the material substratum of things.

---

<sup>15</sup> See Taylor (1989) and Ricoeur (1992).

<sup>16</sup> Proverbs 4:23....

Het woord ‘uitgangen’ vinden we in de Statenvertaling. Andere vertalingen gebruiken het woord ‘bron’ (Nieuwe Bijbelvertaling; Willibrord vertaling) of ‘oorsprongen’ (Nederlands Bijbel Genootschap).

<sup>17</sup> The entire sentence reads: “Oh, no single piece of our mental world is to be hermetically sealed off from the rest, and there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over *all*, does not cry: ‘Mine!’” “Sphere Sovereignty,” in James D. Bratt, ed., *Abraham Kuyper: A centennial reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 488.

The fourth tenet—that reality exists “as meaning”—is, as I said, a bit difficult to digest semantically. After all, how can it be that every thing’s being amounts to “pointing and expressing” and yet is “itself” not something?<sup>18</sup> I am inclined to give Dooyeweerd the benefit of the doubt here. The main point is that Dooyeweerd proves himself to be a modern thinker, particularly in his rejection of any form of metaphysics. He clearly maintains that metaphysics proceeds, per definition, from an autonomous attitude of theoretical thought, such that when one philosophizes about things (beings and their relations) it takes them to be “things as such”—as substances—with (primary and secondary) qualities. And that, even when one does not take these substances to be autonomous, it is inevitable that when the dust settles and one has taken stock of the hierarchy of entities in one’s purview, one will begin to speculate about the *highest* Being, the *causa sui*, the uncaused cause of itself and all that is. But, according to Dooyeweerd, philosophizing about (God or) some such highest being is out of the question, at least not without Scripture. In other words, Dooyeweerd, early on, was not alone in opposing this kind of theo-ontology.<sup>19</sup>

How should one characterize this attempt at Christian philosophy? I don’t think that this is a philosophy with a Christian topic or object, at least not in the first place. Reformational philosophy is not interested in philosophizing about God or about how God knows what he knows, or about how one would come to know that; nor are logical arguments seeking to support the truth of specifically Christian presuppositions (nor most anything else) high on the list of priorities. Neither is it the case that this is a philosophy that avails itself of a particular approach or method. The clearest case in point is the *pièce de résistance* of Dooyeweerd’s philosophy, the so-called “transcendental critique of theoretical thought.” Its explicit intention was to show with quite ordinary philosophical means that there is not a philosophy in the world that can operate without a religious starting point. Must we then conclude that reformational philosophy is a philosophy that proceeds from a defined sense of inspiration or life-commitment? At first blush, that is certainly the case. All four main points discussed above clearly have a religiously reflective character. But caution is in order, because these (Christian, inspired) insights do not function as foundation so much as, at most, entry points. They are pretheoretical intuitions that—once transposed to the philosophical level—must still prove their worth. In addition, the validity of some of these intuitions can in principle not be proven because they are beyond the grasp and past the limits of theoretical thought. Using terminology reminiscent of Immanuel Kant, Dooyeweerd speaks here of origin, unity, and coherence in diversity as “transcendental ideas.” In addition, he states explicitly that philosophy cannot be an extrapolation of everyday (worldviewish) insight.<sup>20</sup> To assume that that is what Christian philosophy is all about is to inflate philosophy’s place and to misapply one’s world-and-life-view. Philosophy has its own agenda and

---

<sup>18</sup> In my opinion, .....

Naar mijn mening staat deze bepaling van het zijnde als zin niet los van de moeilijkheden die er bestaan met betrekking tot Dooyeweerd’s opvattingen over individualiteit zoals die in zijn theorie van de individualiteits- of dingstructuren naar voren komen (zie van Riessen 1970, pp. 182 e.v. en Strauss 2009, pp. 449 e.v.). In de bepaling van het zijnde als zin spelen wetten een belangrijke rol; de universele (of ten minste domeinspecifieke) gelding van wetten heeft betrekking op dat wat geldt voor een werkelijkheidsaspect of domein; hetgeen tot de onaantrekkelijke gedachte leidt dat het individuele dat is wat aan deze wetmatige bepaaldheid (‘gelding’) ontsnapt.

<sup>19</sup> Is it possible that Dooyeweerd goes too far here?.....

Gaat Dooyeweerd hier niet een beetje te ver? Is metafysica per definitie verbonden met verabsolutering van de theoretische denkhouding? Ik denk dat deze laatste opvatting inderdaad te ver gaat. Er zijn allerlei vormen van metafysica. Er zijn hernemingen van klassieke metafysische discussies met de middelen van de analytische filosofie. Er zijn vormen van neothomisme die zich ontwikkelen in discussie met de fenomenologie en het deconstructionisme. Er zijn ontologieën met een beperkter horizon en zonder speculaties over het hoogste Zijn. Toch – de verleiding God op te sluiten in een systeem van noodzakelijke denkwaarheden moge in het huidige tijdsgewricht niet erg groot lijken; de verleiding daartoe ligt vlak om de hoek, in aanmerking nemende de behoefte aan ‘denk’- zuiverheid van de filosoof. In die zin blijft Dooyeweerd’s kritiek actueel.

<sup>20</sup> Dooyeweerd (1953-1958), Vol. I, pp. 128, 158.

remains tied to theoretical abstraction. The perspective that worldview offers is “thicker,” more encompassing and content-rich and, in certain ways, also more foundational.<sup>21</sup>

Have we returned to “go”? None of the three lines sketched above lead us to suppose that Dooyeweerd’s philosophy can be called “Christian.” That’s strange, because if there is one philosophy in the continental tradition—next to neo-Thomism—that is perceived as being Christian, it would certainly be reformational philosophy.<sup>22</sup> Are we possibly on the wrong track, or is there something amiss with our rubric? Could it be that the Christian character of his philosophy is more intangible, tied maybe to ethnic ethos or language group?

I think not. I will admit that my rubric is a bit stilted, but it has served as a catalyst to clarify what is at issue. When we look at Dooyeweerd’s development, for example, we see him move from an initial worldview orientation toward a philosophical approach that is more difficult to categorize, in which the Christian character is especially evident in particular focal points and in a peculiar style of argumentation.<sup>23</sup> These focal points are altogether philosophical: origin, unity, reality’s coherence and diversity—classical philosophical themes. And attending to the status of theoretical thought is clearly part of what philosophy is all about. So too, these insights are presented with philosophical argumentation and finesse, with only marginal reference to parallel insights from worldview and religion. What is Christian about Dooyeweerd’s philosophy is not owing to the object (approach 1), or to the method (approach 2), and not even to his Christian spirituality or inspiration as such (approach 3). For, by the time this inspiration has been transformed into philosophical insight, that insight can stand on its own two feet, for it has earned a contextual weight and place in the broader philosophical debate. Because the

---

<sup>21</sup> The perspective that worldview offers....

Het wereldbeschouwelijke perspectief is overigens ook bij Dooyeweerd geen onschokbaar fundament. Vanuit de vakwetenschappen en de filosofie kunnen allerlei wereldbeschouwelijke inzichten ter discussie komen te staan. Ik denk aan inzichten uit de kosmologie, de evolutietheorie, de neurowetenschappen, en de sociale wetenschappen. En filosofisch aan de verwerking van fenomenologie, hermeneutiek en deconstructionisme. Het is moeilijk Dooyeweerd’s filosofie hier in een paar zinnen te typeren. Als Dooyeweerd ingaat op allerlei vakwetenschappen (wiskunde, biologie, sociale wetenschappen, het recht) dan staat hij open voor verandering van wijsgerig inzicht en van terminologie (bijv. in het gebruik van de term enkapsis). Tegelijk zoekt hij in de vakwetenschappen naar bevestiging van bij hem zelf gegroeid systematisch inzicht.

<sup>22</sup> Where does neo-Thomism fit in this scheme....

Hoe past thomistische filosofie in deze driedeling? Zij heeft kenmerken van alle drie de benaderingen. Zij heeft een eigen agenda, doordat ze zich richt op typisch christelijke onderwerpen: het bestaan van God, het bestaan van een onsterfelijke ziel, de aard van het lijden enz. Ze heeft een eigen methode ontleend aan de scholastieke metafysica, bij sommigen aangevuld met de middelen van de analytische filosofie. En ze heeft een eigen, christelijke inspiratie. Als Moreland & Rae (2000) zeggen dat de mens naar bijbels inzicht een ziel heeft die ook na de dood voortbestaat en er in een adem aan toevoegen dat alleen het substantiedualisme recht kan doen aan dit bijbelse gegeven dan zien we elementen van alle drie de benaderingen: een christelijk thema; een methode die teruggrijpt op scholastische onderscheidingen; en een christelijke inspiratie (behoud van ‘de’ ziel). Mijn moeite met deze benadering vloeit voort uit de observatie dat het metafysische concept ziel (in het substantiedualisme) van een heel andere orde is dan het bijbelse concept ziel. De ziel wordt in de bijbel bijvoorbeeld nergens ‘onsterfelijk’ genoemd en evenmin heeft ze een onvernietigbare ‘natuur’, kenmerken die Moreland & Rae juist wel aan de ziel toeschrijven met een beroep op het substantiedenken. De voorwetenschappelijke geloofstaal en de taal van de filosofie worden met andere woorden onvoldoende van elkaar onderscheiden. Tegelijk realiseer ik me dat een Kantiaans of neo-Kantiaans denkgereedschap (dat sterk accent legt op ‘grenzen’ en op het verbod om voorbij de grenzen van het empirische te gaan) mogelijk te weinig recht doet aan het ‘substantieve’ karakter van ‘de’ ziel. Ons bestaan is beziel. We kunnen lijden aan een gebrek aan bezieling. We spreken vandaag (weer) over de ziel van de samenleving of de ziel van een organisatie. Die termen duiden op meer dan alleen een hulpconstructie die onze verstandsbegrippen de goede weg op helpt. Het blijft een uitdaging te zoeken naar een wijsgerig vocabulaire voor de ziel dat niet in het vaarwater komt van Antieke of Cartesiaanse opvattingen van de ziel en toch iets van dit ‘substantieve’ karakter laat zien. Zie Glas (1996) over hoe met deze kwestie in de reformatisch wijsgerige traditie is omgegaan; en Glas (2006a; 2007a) voor mijn eigen insteek.

<sup>23</sup> See Verburg....

Zie Verburg (1989), hoofdstuk 1 en 2; Henderson (1994) laat zien hoe de aanvankelijke nadruk op de idee van een ‘godelijk wereldplan’ geleidelijk overgaat in de idee van het hart dat zich richt op de oorsprong van zin.



argumentation directed to rival positions is comprehensible and remains philosophically cogent throughout, it is no longer necessary for Dooyeweerd to repeatedly and explicitly refer to Christian starting points.

So, thinking that through: the outcome of such a development is one that maintains that true philosophy is Christian philosophy—which is, as we saw, a variant of the second approach (Christian method). Such a philosophy might even argue that the predicate “Christian” is immaterial: there is only good and less good philosophy. Good philosophy converges per definition with Christian insight. Dooyeweerd never went that far though, because his concept of philosophy is much less brazen. Philosophy remains a theoretical activity and, as such, limited. It can never grasp the breadth and depth of a religious worldview’s insight. The Christian world-and-life-view, as we saw, does not allow itself to be taken up and transformed in its entirety into philosophy. A tension remains, such that comparisons back and forth, between philosophy and heartfelt conviction, will always be part of the picture. It is understandable then that Dooyeweerd, also later in life, continued to move from religious certainties to philosophy and back again.<sup>24</sup>

In summary, I see Dooyeweerd the philosopher as someone who came to embrace a very unique position—one that resists the confines of the three-fold rubric with which I began: *Christian philosophy is a philosophy inspired by a Christian world-and-life-view, but one that qua conceptual articulation and argumentation can stand, intentionally, on its own two feet and take its own insights as thesis into the debate.*<sup>25</sup>

Is this a case of wanting to have one’s cake and eat it too? The claim to be both bona fide philosophy and truly Christian? It is for those who (like Husserl) take philosophy to be “rigorous science.” But that (idealist) view is subject to the critique mentioned earlier on—the self-referential inconsistency of the assertion that reason must be its own yardstick. Besides, that point of view has lost most of its allure among philosophers of late. Have your cake and eat it too? Well, yes, in a certain sense. But as far as that is concerned—and *I can’t emphasize that enough*—there is no difference between Christian and nonchristian philosophy. Every philosophy, in a certain sense, is subject to the influence of pretheoretical convictions and intuitions. And every scientific/theoretical insight that is promoted to the status of philosophy runs the risk of devolving into bad metaphysics. However, more important than this fact is what follows from it: Is one, as philosopher, ready to substantiate one’s own insights with philosophical means and to defend these against those insights that rival these?

Dooyeweerd was clearly up to the challenge. His vision and approach led him to a perspective that claimed to be richer, more livable, and internally more consistent than competing perspectives. Exposing and critiquing antinomies was Dooyeweerd’s philosophical method in rising to this challenge. Briefly put, his critique presumed that absolutizing one dimension of

---

<sup>24</sup> Vernieuwing en bezinning...

Ik denk bijvoorbeeld aan *Vernieuwing en Bezinning* (Dooyeweerd 1963). In de verhouding levensbeschouwing – filosofie gaat het om tweerichtingsverkeer, met in de loop van Dooyeweerds filosofische ontwikkeling een geleidelijk vaster komen te liggen van de patronen. De levensbeschouwing draagt inzichten aan die als intuïties of ideeën in de filosofie worden ingebracht. De filosofie kritiseert anderzijds het wereldbeschouwelijke, bijvoorbeeld op punten waar de speculatie de overhand krijgt. Het kader blijft transcendentiaal, de invulling ontwikkelt zich – kort gezegd – van calvinistisch naar oecumenisch. Dat Dooyeweerds filosofie oecumenisch wordt zou kunnen worden gezien als een eerste, schoorvoetende stap op weg naar de positie die alle filosofie als christelijke filosofie ziet. Zoals ik in de hoofdttekst al heb betoogd gaat Dooyeweerd niet zover. Steeds weer waarschuwt hij dat de beperkingen van de filosofie in het oog moeten worden gehouden.

<sup>25</sup> “Standing on its own two feet” does not imply....

Het ‘op eigen benen kunnen staan’ gaat niet zover dat de ladder van de levensbeschouwing na gebruik kan worden afdankt (het beeld is van Wittgenstein). Zo ver kan en wil Dooyeweerd niet gaan. De beweging tussen levensbeschouwing en filosofie gaat in beide richtingen. Filosofische posities hebben het karakter van (hermeneutisch) ontwerp. Deze ontwerpen worden voortdurend bijgesteld, door intern wijsgerige argumentatie, maar ook op basis van feedback uit de leefwereld.

reality would inevitably lead to internal contradictions in the philosophies of those who did so. Ascertaining antinomies helps one track down where relative truths have been elevated to absolute truths and, eventually (after many, many steps), to point out a defined order of modal aspects, none of which is absolute (or sufficient unto itself).

How have things fared since Dooyeweerd laid down his pen? Contrary to what is often thought to be the case, reformational philosophy has never been an altogether homogeneous movement. So many heads, so many minds! Though sometimes confusing for the student, the variations nonetheless prove the point that Christian philosophy is not a matter of course and encompasses a range of ways and means.

I will limit myself to a brief analysis of strengths and weaknesses. The movement itself was successful both within the Netherlands and internationally; albeit, to my mind, underestimated, qua content and impact, in philosophical circles still today. Educationally, certainly within the Netherlands, it has had a significant presence. With recognized chairs in reformational philosophy at most of the major Dutch universities, thousands of students have been reached who otherwise would have had little or no involvement with philosophy. They were challenged to consider some of the tensions that run deep within our culture and were provided with a vocabulary to name those tensions. They also learned to evaluate critically how the results of research and scholarship are used and maneuvered in society—learning, for example, to distinguish between methodic reduction (or abstraction) and reductionisms. In terms of impact and dissemination, work in the philosophy of technology, the philosophical critique of culture, and the philosophy of law and society was particularly successful.<sup>26</sup> The questions as to the relationship of faith and science have been addressed on a variety of levels as well.<sup>27</sup> Progress has been booked in the philosophy of the natural sciences and, to a somewhat less extent, in the philosophy of biology.<sup>28</sup> Connections were also laid with informatics and systems theory.<sup>29</sup> Aesthetics has received a good deal of attention, as well as philosophical anthropology and philosophy of mind, including the philosophical foundations of psychology.<sup>30</sup> A start was made in the field of philosophical ethics, particularly in the form of what today is called the “normative practice” model<sup>31</sup>—a model that was subsequently applied to medicine, education, management, and the fields of media and communication. Dooyeweerd’s theory of modal aspects was likewise amended here and there along the way.<sup>32</sup> Strange as it may seem, little has been done in philosophical theology. Likewise, Dooyeweerd’s transcendental critique of theoretical thought—originally intended to engage opponents in dialog—unfortunately remained by and large a topic

---

<sup>26</sup> See....

Zie wat betreft de techniekfilosofie bijvoorbeeld Schuurman (1995; 2009), Verkerk et al. (2007); wat betreft de cultuurkritiek van Riessen (1957; 1967), Goudzwaard (1979), Goudzwaard and De Lange (1995) en Goudzwaard, VanderVennen & Van Heemst (2007); wat betreft de sociale filosofie Mouw & Griffioen (1993), Griffioen and Van Woudenberg (1996), Buijs et al. (2001), Chaplin (2007; 2008) en Kuiper (2009); wat betreft de rechtsfilosofie Dooyeweerd (1950) en Van Eikema Hommes (1979).

<sup>27</sup> See Klapwijk et al. (1976); Geertsema (1992); Glas (2009a; 2009b; 2009c); Van der Meer (1996); Van Woudenberg (1992; 1996). For deep-going, more epistemological analysis see Stafleu (1981; 1982a; 1982b; 1995).

<sup>28</sup> For an overview, see Stafleu (1996); also Stafleu (2002); Klapwijk (2008b).

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Strijbos (1996a; 1996b); Strijbos and Basden (2006); Basden (2008).

<sup>30</sup> For aesthetics, see Seerveld....

Zie wat betreft de esthetica: Seerveld (1987; 2000), Chaplin-Dengerink (1999); wat betreft de wijsgerige antropologie: Glas (1996); vakfilosofie van de geneeskunde, psychologie en psychiatrie: Cusveller (2004); Glas (2002; 2007b; 2007c; 2009a; 2009b; 2009c); Ouweneel (1986).

<sup>31</sup> For ethics, see Troost.....

Zie wat betreft de ethiek in het algemeen Troost (1983; 1992a; 1992b); wat betreft het normatieve praktijkmodel: Jochemsen & Glas (1997); Hoogland & Jochemsen (2000); Jochemsen (2000 >>>2006??).

<sup>32</sup> See Ouweneel...

Zie bijv. Ouweneel (1986) met een pleidooi voor introductie van een perceptieve modaliteit naast de psychische (sensitieve);

for internal discussion.<sup>33</sup> Much energy, seen now after the fact, was also devoted to an intramural discussion of Dooyeweerd's concept of time.<sup>34</sup>

And as for the future? I will limit myself to a few broad strokes and then narrow my focus to pencil in a few details. As an academic discipline, philosophy today finds itself in troubled waters. Therein, however, also rests a wonderful opportunity for the Dooyeweerdian variant of philosophy. Contemporary philosophy finds itself in a bind: on the one hand, charting intellectual depth-dimensions and booking scholarly progress seem to call for increasing specialization; on the other hand, that same specialization makes the field itself increasingly opaque and inaccessible for most students in general and irrelevant for "normal" people in particular. All the while, relevance to and impact on society are increasingly dominant marks of quality. And running parallel to these quandaries is the fact that (interdisciplinary) connections to other sciences and academic disciplines are not being addressed. Interdisciplinarity, however, is integral to the warp and woof of the Dooyeweerdian tradition—a trump card if there ever was one. Next to the ongoing conscientious work that remains crucial in fields like epistemology, ontology, and the history of philosophy, I see a bright future for further developments in the philosophy of the special sciences, including of those disciplines devoted to specific practices (like medicine, psychology, education, management)—yes, I envision the prospect of collaboration on professional ethics with technical and pre-professional schools as well.

### III. Double sensitivity and the I-self relationship

So then, what do I take Christian philosophy to be? With Dooyeweerd, I take Christian philosophy to be a project that begins with a set of insights, of which the comprehensive framework of one's basic beliefs (or worldview) is clearly recognized by many as in the background, but that does not necessarily need to draw on that background in the process of philosophical discourse. Take, for example, the notion of the irreducibility of the modal aspects, the primacy of the lifeworld for theoretical thought, or that reality does not rest in itself but awaits disclosure—an unfolding defined by the attunement of structure and direction. Christian philosophy wants to stand on its own two feet philosophically through the use of argument and by seeking to meet the criteria of being consistent, cordial, and comprehensive. I continue to value the Dooyeweerdian type of analysis as a heuristic tool to uncover how a philosopher thinks about the coherence and diversity within reality as well as about its unity and origin. Even though philosophy is not the elaboration of basic worldview beliefs, it does remain connected to them. In fact, I believe that the ways in which the relationship between worldview and philosophy is given shape will result in a more diverse palette than the one-sided transcendental approach that Dooyeweerd himself employs.<sup>35</sup> Christian philosophy knows many guises and will usually be defined by how one adapts one's philosophy to the context in which one operates. That attunement determines how the relationship between worldview and philosophy gets defined.

This way of seeing things softens the contrast some see between analytic and continental approaches to Christian philosophizing. Dooyeweerd's philosophy has a continental flavor to it—his conceptual handle, a neo-Kantian slant, if you will. His is a very different world than that of the more analytically oriented "reformed epistemology." One can understand these

---

<sup>33</sup> See, e.g., Steen (1983) and recently Clouser (2009).

<sup>34</sup> For an overview see Brüggeman-Kruijff (1981; 1982).

<sup>35</sup> This point...

Dit punt is overigens in reformatorsch wijsgerige kring in ruime mate herkend (Strauss 1984; Clouser 2009). Vanaf de jaren zeventig is veelvuldig een pleidooi gevoerd om het transcendentale perspectief om te vormen tot een meer open (transcendentiaal)hermeneutisch perspectief, zie bijv. Geertsema (1970; 1987; 1992), Hoogland (1994), Klapwijk (1986; 1987; 1991), van der Hoeven (1993). Ook de Boer zoekt het in die richting, met name in de opstellen 'Hermeneutiek van de transcendentie' en 'Transcendentie en transcendentale kritiek' in de Boer (1996), pp. 156-195 resp. 236-257.

differences, however, when taken in their context. Dooyeweerd used the philosophical means available to him at the time. He assessed his times in terms of the crisis articulated by German historian and philosopher Oswald Spengler in his *The Decline of the West* (1918) and called for a much more critical reflection on the foundations of philosophical thought than had already transpired after the demise of German idealism and neo-Kantianism. Reformed epistemologists speak to a context defined almost exclusively by an analytic style of philosophizing. One usually has no other choice than to avail oneself of the theoretical tools of one's time.

That said, I am convinced that Dooyeweerdians and reformed epistemologists have much to offer each other. The analytically trained philosopher may well learn from Dooyeweerd's sensitivity for the pretended autonomy of the theoretical attitude of thought or from his aversion to any form of speculation about God and God's attributes. At the same time—further research will have to tell—Dooyeweerd might have been overly sensitive in some things, for example in rejecting any notion of substance (of bare particulars distinct of properties or attributes and as denoting irreducible individuality). On the other hand, reformational philosophy can learn from the openness and argumentative force of colleagues trained in the analytic tradition, even though those in that lineage may at times rather naively introduce particular truths of the faith or too hastily label them as “properly basic.” I also wonder about the extent to which that same tradition lacks sensitivity for philosophical themes and questions arising within the special sciences—something that the Dooyeweerdian approach is strong on. In any case, I see reflecting on these kinds of differences as a crucial component of Christian philosophizing.<sup>36</sup> Exercising one's sensitivity to these matters is crucial: understanding how a thinker relates to the topic at hand and being sensitive to how one postures oneself in that context. Elsewhere I have described this process as cultivating a double sensitivity.<sup>37</sup> With a wink to the Danish philosopher we could speak of a Kierkegaardian footnote to Herman Dooyeweerd's thought.<sup>38</sup>

Is this not hermeneutical philosophy—in the sense of a sort of meta-level approach to how Christians, but not only them, perceive the relationship between worldview and philosophy? Bringing the implicit attitude of the thinker to the surface regarding the topic addressed and, with that, the context within which the project is situated? Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that we are indeed talking here about a form of explication and meaning analysis.<sup>39</sup> No, because the hermeneutical approach remains tied to a particular reflexive tradition of thought, which with good reason has been subjected to a good deal of critique—because clearly not everything can be appropriated reflexively (e.g., certain forms of evil) and because philosophizing also develops in relation to that which eludes articulation. My more specific objection is that, before one knows it, hermeneutics—as meta-philosophy of the relationship between worldview and philosophy—takes on a synthesizing and legitimating role and is, in turn, granted a dominant position with respect to insights from the lifeworld. Some forms of deconstructionism, I believe, evidence the same tendency. I have been fascinated by the subtlety of and the intelligence behind those approaches; also, their acknowledgement of finitude, alterity, and openness. But what gnaws at

---

<sup>36</sup> I also think, e.g., of ....

Ik denk bijvoorbeeld ook aan een denker als Paul Ricoeur (1998), wiens aarzeling om het religieuze moment in zijn filosofie aan de orde te stellen, naar eigen zeggen verband houdt met een franse academische context, die in sterke mate wordt gedomineerd door het concept ‘laïcité’ en de uit dit concept voortvloeiende scheiding van het religieuze en het publieke en van kerk en staat. Verklaren is wat anders dan rechtvaardigen en dat geldt ook hier.

<sup>37</sup> See Glas, 2006a.

<sup>38</sup> See also my ....

Zie hierover ook G. Glas ‘The thinker and the truth. Kierkegaard and reformational philosophy’ (submitted).

<sup>39</sup> Given my background in ...

Overigens ligt hier voor mij, vanuit mijn andere discipline, ook een punt van vergelijking: ook de psychiater en de psychotherapeut letten op hoe de ander zich tot zijn thema verhoudt en relateren die verhouding aan de professionele relatie als context waarin een bepaald thema ter sprake wordt gebracht. Vaak zegt het hoe meer dan het wat.

me is the very character of these points of view: the remarkable fact that, for all their subtlety and feel for relationships, one's own hyper-reflexivity is not factored in or accounted for. The form of hermeneutics that I have in mind here remains a form of analysis—an analysis of positions and ways of relating—but it does not become a separate synthetic meta-discipline. In addition, that conceptual analysis avails itself of the analytic tradition, for example, in the analysis of performative speech acts and in the application of the same to social and religious phenomena. Nick Wolterstorff, Charles Taylor, and Paul Ricoeur are representative of this approach.<sup>40</sup>

Does Christian philosophy then not become a form of navel-gazing—the cultivation of self-interpretations? No, I don't think so. As I said, we are talking about one part, one aspect of Christian philosophizing. Given the double sensitivity referred to above, one can positively embrace the work done in the various subdisciplines: the critique of culture, the philosophy of the special sciences, professional ethics, central epistemological and ontological themes, etc. The fundamental framework is what is Christian here: the idea of a multifaceted, ordered reality that is not sufficient unto itself and that calls for normed unfolding—a developing that can be denoted in terms of structure, direction, and context. There are huge questions to be grappled with here; for example, concerning the nature of “nature” and the notion of “order.” In the world picture of evolutionism, for example, nature and order are contingent, the product of development by happenstance, and humankind simply an epiphenomenon. How that picture relates to the image of a God who creates and rules is obviously also a question worth pondering.

Does this mean that Christian philosophy has no uniquely Christian themes (see approach 1)? After all, what I have argued for so far could be summarized as: follow in Dooyeweerd's footsteps with a worldview-inspired Christian philosophy that is articulated with philosophical means and an ongoing analysis in terms of structure and direction; a philosophy that allows for more variation than did Dooyeweerd and that emphasizes a (double) sensitivity for how one relates to one's own points of view and how that relationship is influenced by (and in turn influences) the debate with those who think otherwise. But . . . is that all? Doesn't Christian philosophy have its own agenda when it comes to matters that are explicitly tied to the content of faith? That is certainly the case.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, we can go a step further: the perspective of creation, however theological the language, of God's law as a cloak that fits reality well, is one theme already mentioned. But there are other givens for Christian thinking that are almost adverse to or at odds with being thematized: the foolishness of the Gospel; the givenness of an evil that is older and stronger than we are; the salvation coming from afar through an incomprehensible act of divine sacrifice; as well as the need for conversion, for surrender and spiritual participation “in Christ,” for transformation through the Holy Spirit, for a Kingdom that is not of this world and yet one that begins among us, etc. There is a spiritual side to reality that cannot be grasped conceptually and yet manifests itself—as power, as *dunamis*.

As strange as it may seem, there are possibilities here for philosophers with a less pretentious view of philosophy; possibilities to introduce contrary points of view and unexpected perspectives as suggestions or options having a degree of plausibility. For philosophers with greater expectations—say, a philosopher in the reflexive continental tradition—this is much more difficult, given their preference to comprehend, their desire to assimilate and synthesize. The same can probably be said for analytic philosophers as they key in on logical and argumentative clarity; although it is my impression that that tradition is more open to highlighting the paradoxical aspects of the Christian faith without reasoning them away.

How could it, without reverting to the company of comprehensive philosophy? Well, maybe we do not have to be so afraid of starting with a comprehensive framework. The work of Johan

---

<sup>40</sup> See Wolterstorff (1995), Taylor (1989, 2007), and Ricoeur (1992).

<sup>41</sup> Plantinga (1984).

van der Hoeven and Henk Geertsema provide wonderful examples of this untroubled attitude.<sup>42</sup> The kind of translation referred to previously can still be taken up in due course: one that is recognizably Christian and yet one that only avails itself of philosophical means to legitimate its claims. I realize that there are limits for philosophy in this regard. And yet there are possibilities here; probably more than have been realized to date.

I will limit myself for the moment to my own interdisciplinary field, the philosophy of psychiatry and psychology, and specifically within that field, to topics like fear and evil. The kind of philosophy that I have in mind first carefully delimits which aspects of human behavior can possibly be explained with existing theories and models and which cannot. Once the theories and models have all been considered, one can conclude that there are dimensions of human behavior that elude theory's grasp and that call for a different sort of vocabulary. For example, in that regard, I have argued elsewhere for implementing a more existential vocabulary when formulating theories about fear.<sup>43</sup> This existential terminology is in the first place philosophical—articulating aspects of clinical reality that do not lend themselves to conceptualization in the more special-scientific context of psychiatry and psychology as such. For example, with people struggling with pathological fear, there is in some cases an empirical, experiential intensity present that often eludes the conceptual vocabularies of psychiatry and psychology—a dynamic intensity that, from a religiously sensitive point of view, could denote the reality of a spiritual dimension. Philosophically speaking, things then get very interesting: both conceptual fields, the religious and the scientific, come close to coinciding. And yet they must be kept distinct. Christian philosophers will be tempted to assimilate the spiritual dimension into their philosophizing. Doing so, however, given the limits inherent to the theoretical attitude of thought, would be inappropriate. The languages of each are different and need to be kept distinct, lest annexation and simplistic system-building be the result.<sup>44</sup> What the philosopher can do is to take note of and to compare the different ways of relating to this dynamic reality—religiously, psychologically, theoretically. Such a comparison could lead, for example, to making the case for an open professional attitude; an attitude defined not only by knowledge and skill, but also by spiritual sensitivity.<sup>45</sup>

Similar types of analysis are possible with respect to evil; for example, regarding the evil brought about by people with a sadistic personality disorder. It is not difficult to ascertain that existing theories about sadism and the development of a sadistic personality disorder don't hold much water.<sup>46</sup> And demonstrating, philosophically or scientifically, that a spiritual dimension is operating in these personalities that could explain sadism is out of the question. To make that claim would be to overestimate philosophy's reach and to suggest that it can actually get a handle on the spiritual dimension of human existence. But, once again, what *can* be done is to carefully distinguish which aspects of this behavior can and which cannot be explained by a particular theory. After considering the theories available, the philosopher can conclude that there are aspects of such a person's behavior that still beg explanation. These aspects will require a vocabulary that is inevitably ambiguous because on the one hand it has to refer to (observable)

---

<sup>42</sup> See, e.g., Van der Hoeven (1980); Geertsema (2005).

<sup>43</sup> See Glas (2001).

<sup>44</sup> This is also the reason that...

Dit is ook de reden dat het richtingsaspect in de ontsluiting van scheppingsstructuren nooit zonder meer vereenzelvigd mag worden met deze geestelijke dimensie van het bestaan. Het gaat in de vakfilosofie om een analyse van een dynamiek waar nog steeds wel empirische correlaten van bestaan: ethos, geneigdheid, splijting, integratie enz.

<sup>45</sup> Elsewhere (Glas 2007a), I have referred to this as "searching for the dynamic within."

<sup>46</sup> Goldberg (1996); Baumeister and Vohs (2004).

behavior and at the same time make room for and denote a dimension that eludes sense perception.<sup>47</sup>

Philosophy is, as I suggested earlier, the thoughtful exploration of tensions. As such, it helps create room—room for that which transcends theoretical thought but which can nonetheless not be avoided.

#### IV. Conclusion

In summary, I see Christian philosophy as a philosophy that is inspired by insights from a centuries-old, long-standing, broad Christian tradition; as a philosophy that, having appropriated these insights, can stand on its own two feet and works to defend its position with arguments. Christian philosophy is conscious of the relation of the thinker to her object, of how influential that relation is, and of the fact that that relation is itself influenced by the context within which the thinker is operating. That is why I have argued for cultivating a double sensitivity and for hermeneutical insight into the way in which the relationship takes shape between worldview and philosophy (on the part of nonchristian philosophers as well). That is my Kierkegaardian footnote to Dooyeweerd's approach. Given its relational and contextual sensitivity, Christian philosophy is necessarily plural: Christian philosophy unfolds within a context and as a certain type of thinking. The Dooyeweerdian variant, undone of its strong transcendental character, still has a strong pedigree, but needs to be supplemented with a more explicit engagement with typical Christian themes, like evil, suffering, finitude, guilt, reconciliation, and healing. Christian philosophy will always retain an edge, a Pascalian tension: rooted in an age-old faith that is not blithely embraced without critique, it will grant independent thought room to roam without losing sight of its limits, while remaining sensitive to doubt and temptations, knowing that both may ultimately be called to account for what they presume, to make plain what often goes without saying.

#### *Bibliography*

#### **>>titles lined-through were not cited**

Barbour, I. G. (1997). *Religion and science. Historical and conceptual issues* (Revised and Expanded Edition of Religion in an Age of Science). New York: HarperCollins.

---

<sup>47</sup> Similar ....

Soortgelijke analyses zijn mogelijk als het gaat om het thema verzoening. Zelf heb ik een poging gedaan in de vorm van een kleine fenomenologie van kwaad en verzoening en daarbij laten zien dat beide een drielagige structuur vertonen die elkaars spiegelbeeld vormen, zie Glas (2006b).

- Basden A. (2008). *Philosophical frameworks for understanding information systems*. Hershey/London: IGI-Publishing (imprint of IGI-Global).
- Baumeister, Roy F. and Vohs, Kathleen D. (2004). "Four roots of evil." In: A.G. Miller (Ed.), *The social psychology of good and evil*. New York & London: The Guilford Press, pp. 85–101.
- De Boer, Theo (1989). *De God van de filosofen en de God van Pascal: Op het grensgebied van filosofie en theologie*. Zoetermeer: Meinema.
- De Boer, Theo (1996). *Langs de gewesten van het zijn. Spiritualiteit van de woestijn. En andere opstellen*. Zoetermeer: Meinema.
- ~~Brink, G. van den, Geertsema, H.G., Hoogland, J. e.a. (red.) (1996). *Filosofie en theologie. Een gesprek tussen christen-filosofen en theologen*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn (in samenwerking met Centrum voor Reformatische Wijsbegeerte).~~
- Brüggeman-Kruijff, A. Th. (1981), Tijd als omsluiting, tijd als ontsluiting (I). *Philosophia Reformata*, 46, 119-163.
- Brüggeman-Kruijff, A. Th. (1982), Tijd als omsluiting, tijd als ontsluiting (II). *Philosophia Reformata*, 47, 41-68.
- Brümmer, Vincent (1988). *Over een persoonlijke God gesproken. Studies in de wijsgerige theologie*. Kampen: Kok Agora.
- Buijs, Govert J. (red.) (2001). *Als de olifanten vechten... Denken over ontwikkelingssamenwerking vanuit christelijk perspectief*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn.
- Chaplin-Dengerink, A. (1999). *Mind, body and art. The problem of meaning in the cognitive aesthetics of Susanne K. Langer*. Uitgave in eigen beheer.
- Chaplin, Jonathan (2007). 'Public justice'. As a critical political norm. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 72, 130-150
- Chaplin, Jonathan (2008). Beyond multiculturalism – but to where? Public justice and cultural diversity. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 73, 190-209
- Clouser, Roy (2009). The transcendental critique revisited and revised. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 74, 21-47
- Cusveller, Bart S. (2004). *Met zorg verbonden. Een filosofische studie naar de zindimensie van verpleegkundige zorgverlening*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn.
- Davies, B. (1993). *An introduction to the philosophy of religion*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ~~Dooyeweerd, H. (1935). *De wijsbegeerte der wetsidee, deel I—III*. Amsterdam: H.J. Paris.~~
- Dooyeweerd, Herman (1953-1958). *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought. Vol. I-IV*. Amsterdam: H.J. Paris/ Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed.



- Dooyeweerd, Herman (1950). *De modale structuur van het juridisch oorzakelijkheidsverband*. Amsterdam: Noord-Hollandische Uitgevers Maatschappij.
- Dooyeweerd, Herman (1963<sup>2</sup>). *Vernieuwing en bezinning. Om het reformatorisch grondmotief*. Zutphen: Van de Brink.
- Van Eikema Hommes, H.J. *Major Trends in the History of Legal Philosophy*, Amsterdam: PUBLISHER. 1979
- Evans, C.S (2006). *Kierkegaard on faith and the self*. Waco: Baylor University Press.
- Evink, E. (2002). *Transcendentie en inscriptie. Jacques Derrida en de hubris van de metafysica*. Delft: Eburon.
- Geertsema, Henk (1970). Transcendentale openheid. Over het zinkarakter van de werkelijkheid in de wijsbegeerte van H. Dooyeweerd. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 35, 25-56 and 132-153.
- Geertsema, Henk (1987). Christian philosophy: transformation or inner reformation. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 52, 139-165.
- Geertsema, Henk (1992). *Het menselijke karakter van ons kennen*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn.
- ~~Geertsema, H. (1995). *Om de humaniteit. Christelijk geloof in gesprek met de moderne cultuur over wetenschap en filosofie*. Kampen: Kok.~~
- Geertsema, Henk (2005). Homo respondens. Het antwoord-karakter van het mens-zijn. In: G. Buijs, P. Blokhuis, S. Griffioen, R. Kuiper (red.). *Homo respondens. Verkenningen rond het mens-zijn*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, pp. 25-45.
- Geivett, R.D. & B. Sweetman (Eds.) (1992). *Contemporary perspectives on religious epistemology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- ~~Glas, G. (1993). *Ontbeemd zijn, contingentie en zin. Over de mogelijkheid de oorsprongsloosheid te denken*. Leiden: Leiden University Press (oratie)~~
- Glas, Gerrit (1996). De mens. Schets van een antropologie vanuit reformatorisch wijsgerig perspectief. In: R. van Woudenberg, *Kennis en werkelijkheid*. Buijten & Schipperheijn/Kok: Amsterdam/Kampen, pp. 86-142.
- Glas, Gerrit (2000). Heeft het theïsme eigen gronden? Alvin Plantinga over de ‘proper basicity’ van religieus geloof. *Philosophia Reformata*, jrg.65, 170-182.
- Glas, Gerrit (2001). *Angst – beleving, structuur, macht*. Amsterdam: Boom.
- Glas, Gerrit (2002). “Churchland, Kandel, and Dooyeweerd on the reducibility of mind states.” *Philosophia Reformata*, jrg. 67, 148-172.
- Glas, Gerrit (2006a). Persons and their lives. Reformational philosophy on man, ethics, and beyond. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 71, 31-57.

- Glas, Gerrit (2006b). Elements of a phenomenology of evil and reconciliation. In: N. Potter (Ed.) (2006), *Trauma, Truth, and Reconciliation. Healing damaged relationships*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 171-202.
- Glas, G. (2007a). Searching for the dynamic 'within'. In: G. Glas, M.H. Spero, P.J. Verhagen, H.M. van Praag (Eds.). *Hearing Visions and Seeing Voices. Psychological Aspects of Biblical Concepts and Personalities*. Dordrecht: Springer, pp. 295-310.
- Glas, Gerrit (2007b). Ambigüiteit in Kandel's neurowetenschappelijke fundering van de psychiatrie. *Tijdschrift voor Psychiatrie*, jrg. 48, 849-856.
- Glas, Gerrit (2007c). Neurowetenschap en de vrije wil. In: C. Dekker, R. van Woudenberg & G. van den Brink (red.), *Omhoog kijken in platland. Over geloven in de wetenschap*. Kampen: Ten Have, pp. 221-242.
- Glas, Gerrit (2009a). Modellen van 'integratie' in de psychologie en psychiatrie (I): het debat. *Psyche en Geloof*, jrg. 20, 152-164.
- Glas, Gerrit (2009b). Modellen van 'integratie' in de psychologie en psychiatrie (II): het normatieve praktijkmodel. *Psyche en Geloof*, jrg. 20, 165-177.
- Glas, Gerrit (2009c). Modellen van 'integratie' in de psychologie en psychiatrie (III): de filosofie van wetenschap en praktijk. *Psyche en Geloof*, jrg. 20, 178-193.
- Goldberg, C. (1996). *Speaking with the Devil: A Dialogue with Evil*. New York: Viking Press.
- Goudzwaard, Bob (1979). *Capitalism and Progress: A Diagnosis of Western society*. CITY: Wedge.
- Goudzwaard, Bob and de Lange, H. (1995). *Beyond Poverty and Affluence: Toward an economy of care*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Goudzwaard, Bob, Vander Vennen, Mark, Van Heemst, David (2007). *Hope in Troubled Times: A new vision for confronting global crises*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Griffioen, Sander and Woudenberg, R. van (1996). "Theorie van sociale gemeenschappen." In: R. van Woudenberg [red.], *Kennis en werkelijkheid. Tweede inleiding tot een christelijke filosofie*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn (in samenwerking met Kok: Kampen), pp. 236-266.
- ~~Hart, H. (1984). *Understanding our world. An integral ontology*. Lanham/New York/London: University of America Press.~~
- Heidegger, M. (1935/1983). Einführung in die Metaphysik. In: *Gesamtausgabe. Band 9*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.
- Helm, Paul (1997). *Faith and understanding*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Henderson, Roger D. (1994). *Illuminating law. The construction of Herman Dooyeweerd's Philosophy 1918-1928*. Academisch proefschrift: Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.
- Hoeven, J. van der (1980). 'Het probleem van het kwaad'. Vuurproef voor levensechtheid en bescheidenheid van het filosoferen (in de hoofdrol Paul Ricoeur). In: *Peilingen. Korte exploraties in wijsgerig stroomgebied*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, pp. 168-193.

- Hoeven, J. van der (1993). Na 50 jaar: Philosophia Reformata – Philosophia Reformanda. In: *Filosofische reflecties en ontmoetingen*. Kampen: Kok, 1993, 90-116.
- Hoogland, J. (1994). De uitdrukingskracht van de transcendentale kritiek. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 59, 114-136.
- Hoogland, J. & Jochemsen, H. (2000). Professional autonomy and the normative structure of medical practice. *Theoretical Medicine and Bioethics*, Vol. 21, 457-475.
- Hubbeling, H.G. (1976). *Denkend geloven. Inleiding tot de wijsbegeerte van de godsdienst*. Assen/Amsterdam: Van Gorcum.
- Jaspers, K. (1948). *Der philosophische Glaube*. München: Piper & Co. Verlag.
- Jochemsen, H. & Glas, G. (1997). *Verantwoord medisch handelen. Proeve van een christelijke medische ethiek*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn.
- Jochemsen, H. (2006). Normative practices as an intermediate between theoretical ethics and morality. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 71, 96–112.
- Kant, I. (1787/1976). *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* [nach der ersten und zweiten Original-Ausgabe neu herausgegeben]. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1843). *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life* (by Viktor Eremita) (transl. Alistair Hannay). Penguin Classics.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1844/1960). *The concept of anxiety. A simple psychologically orienting deliberation on the dogmatic issue of hereditary sin* (Translation of Begrebet Angest. Ed. and transl. by R. Thomte in collaboration with A.B. Anderson). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1845/1992). *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments* (ed. and transl. by Howard V. en Edna H. Hong). Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1848/1980). *The Sickness Unto Death. A Christian Psychological Exposition for Upbuilding and Awakening*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Klapwijk, J. (1986). Antithesis, synthesis, and the idea of transformational philosophy. *Philosophia Reformata*, 51, 138-152.
- Klapwijk, J. (1987). Reformational philosophy on the boundary between the past and the future. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 52, 101-134.
- Klapwijk, J. (1991). Epilogue: The idea of transformational philosophy. In: J. Klapwijk, S. Griffioen en G. Groenewoud (Eds.). *Bringing into captivity every thought. Capita selecta in the history of Christian evaluations of non-Christian philosophy*. Lanham: University Press of America, pp. 241-266.
- Klapwijk, J. (2008a). Rede en religie in de greep van grondmodellen. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 73, 19- 43

- Klapwijk, J. (2008b) *Purpose in the Living World? Creation and Emergent Evolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Klapwijk, J., Griffioen, S. & Groenewoud, G. (red.) (1976). *Vrede met de rede? Over het vraagstuk van rede en religie, van autonomie en heil*. Van Gorcum: Assen/ Amsterdam.
- Kuiper, R. (2009). *Moreel kapitaal. Over de verbindingskracht van de samenleving*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn Motief.
- Kuyper, Abraham "Sphere Sovereignty," in James D. Bratt, ed., *Abraham Kuyper: A centennial reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), PP-PP.
- Labooy, G. (2007). *Waar geest is, is vrijheid. Filosofie van de psychiatrie voorbij Descartes*. Amsterdam: Boom.
- Meer, J.M. van der (ed.) (1996). *Facets of faith and science. Vol. 2: The role of beliefs in mathematics and the natural sciences: An Augustinian perspective*. Lanham/London: University of America Press.
- Moreland, J.P. & Rae, S.B. (2000). *Body and Soul. Human Nature and the Crisis in Ethics*. Downers Grove [Illinois]: Intervarsity Press.
- Mouw, R. & Griffioen S. (1993). *Pluralisms and Horizons. An Essay in Christian Public Philosophy*. Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Publ. Comp.
- Ouweneel, W.J. (1986). *De leer van de mens. Proeve van een christelijk-wijsgerige antropologie*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1986
- Pascal, Blaise (1995). *Pensées and Other Writings*. Trans. Honor Levi. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Plantinga, A. (1983). Reason and belief in God. In: A. Plantinga & N. Wolterstorff (Eds.). *Faith and rationality. Reason and belief in God*. Notre Dame/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 16-91.
- Plantinga, A. (1984). Advice to Christian philosophers. *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 253-271.
- Plantinga, A. (1990), *The twin pillars of christian scholarship*. Calvin College and Seminary: Grand Rapids,.
- Plantinga, A. (1992). Augustinian Christian Philosophy. *The Monist*, Vol. 75, 291-319
- Plantinga, A. (2000), *Warranted Christian Belief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Ricoeur, P. (1992). *Oneself as another* [translated by Kathleen Blamey]. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1998); *Critique and conviction: conversations with François Azouvi and Marc de Launay*. New York: Columbia University Press (oorspronkelijk: *Critique et la conviction* [1995]).
- Van Riessen, Henk (1957). *The Society of the Future* Presbyterian and Reformed: CITY??.

- Van Riessen, Henk (1967). *Mondigheid en de machten*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn.
- Van Riessen, Henk (1970). *Wijsbegeerte*. Kampen: Kok.
- Sarot, M. (2006). *De goddeloosheid van de wetenschap. Theologie, geloof en het gangbare wetenschapsideaal*. Zoetermeer: Boekencentrum.
- Schuurman, Egbert (2009). *Technology and the Future*, trans. H. Donald Morton (CITY??: Paideia) *iek en toekomst. Confrontatie met wijsgerige beschouwingen*. Assen: Van Gorcum.
- Schuurman, Egbert. (1990). *Filosofie van de technische wetenschappen*. Amsterdam: Martinus Nijhoff. *Perspectives on Technology and Culture*, trans. John H. Kok (Sioux Center: Dordt College Press, 1995).
- Seerveld, Calvin (1987). "Imaginitivity." *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 4, 43-58.
- Seerveld, Calvin (2000). *Bearing Fresh Olive Leaves: Alternative steps in understanding art*. Toronto: Toronto Tuppence Press.
- Stafleu, M.D. (1981). "Theories as Logically Qualified Artifacts." *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 46, 164-189.
- Stafleu, M.D. (1982a). Theories as logically qualified artifacts. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 47, 20-40.
- Stafleu, M.D. (1982b). *Theories at Work: On the structure and functioning of theories in science, in particular during the Copernican Revolution*. Lanham: University Press of America.
- Stafleu, M.D. (1995). Modelvorming als heuristisch instrument in het wetenschappelijke ontsluitingsproces. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 60, 1-15.
- Stafleu, M.D. (1996). "Filosofie van de natuurwetenschap." In: R. van Woudenberg [red.], *Kennis en werkelijkheid. Tweede inleiding tot een christelijke filosofie*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn (in samenwerking met Kok: Kampen), pp. 177-202.
- Stafleu, M.D. (2002). *Een wereld vol relatie. Karakter en zin van natuurlijke dingen en processen*. Amsterdam: Buijten en Schipperheijn.
- Steen, P.J. (1983). *The structure of Herman Dooyeweerd's thought*. Toronto: Wedge Publication Foundation.
- Strauss, D.F.M. (1984). An analysis of the structure of analysis. *Philosophia Reformata* , Vol. 49, 35-56.
- Strauss, D.F.M. (2009). *Philosophy. Disciplines of the disciplines*. Grand Rapids: Paideia Press.
- Strijbos, S. (1996a). The concept of the 'open system' – another machine metaphor for the organism? In: J.M. van der Meer (ed.). *Facets of faith and science. Vol. 3: The role of beliefs in the natural sciences*. Lanham/London: University of America Press, pp. 157-168.
- Strijbos, S. (1996b). The concept of hierarchy in contemporary systems thinking - a key to overcoming reductionism? In: J.M. van der Meer (ed.). *Facets of faith and science. Vol. 3: The*

- role of beliefs in the natural sciences*. Lanham/London: University of America Press, pp. 243-256.
- Strijbos, S. & Basden, A. (Eds.) (2006). *In Search of an Integrative Vision of Technology: Interdisciplinary Studies in Information Systems*. New York: Springer [Contemporary Systems Thinking Series].
- Swinburne, R. (1979). *The existence of God*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Taylor, C. (1989). *Sources of the self. The making of the modern identity*. Cambridge (Mass.): Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, C. (2007). *A secular age*. Cambridge (Mass.): The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Troost, A. (1983). *The christian ethos. A philosophical survey*. Patmos: Bloemfontein.
- Troost, A. (1992a), Normativiteit. Oorsprong en ondergang van het denken over scheppingsordeningen. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 57, 3-38.
- Troost, A. (1992b), De tweeërlei aard van de wet. *Philosophia Reformata*, Vol. 57, 117-131.
- Verburg, M.E. (1989). *Herman Dooyeweerd. Leven en werk van een Nederlands christen-wijsgeer*. Baarn: Ten Have.
- Verkerk, M., Hoogland, J., Van der Stoep, J. en de Vries, M.J. (2007). *Denken, ontwerpen, maken. Basisboek techniekfilosofie*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn Motief, in samenwerking met uitgeverij BOOM.
- ~~Vollenhoven, D.H.Th. (1933). *Het Calvinisme en de Reformatie van de wijsbegeerte*. Amsterdam: H.J.Paris.~~
- Vos, A. (1981). *Kennis en noodzakelijkheid: een kritische analyse van het absolute evidentialisme in wijsbegeerte en theologie*. Kampen: Kok.
- Vries, H. de (1999). *Philosophy and the turn to religion*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- ~~Wolters, A.M. (1985). *Creation regained. Biblical basics for a reformational worldview*. Grand Rapids, W.B. Eerdmans. Later edition~~
- Wolterstorff, N. (1995). *Divine discourse: Philosophical reflections on the claim that God speaks*. Cambridge/New York/Melbourne: Cambridge University Press.
- ~~Wolterstorff, N. (2008). *Justice: Rights and wrongs*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.~~
- Woudenberg, R. van (1992). *Gelovend denken. Inleiding tot een christelijke filosofie*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn (in samenwerking met Kok: Kampen).
- Woudenberg, R. van (1996). Theorie van het kennen. In: R. van Woudenberg [red.], *Kennis en werkelijkheid. Tweede inleiding tot een christelijke filosofie*. Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn (in samenwerking met Kok: Kampen), pp. 21-85.